

Annual Report 2023-2024





Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia Inc.
Victorian Registration No. A0044737S ARBN 641 358 581 ABN 31 721 856 687

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Cover image: *Ducklings inspecting a dry stone wall, Lethbridge field trip (Raelene Marshall).*



DSWAA VISION and STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

The Association's vision is that dry stone walls and dry stone structures (DSW & DSS) are widely accepted for their unique place in the history and culture of the nation and for the legacy they represent.

Our Statement of Purposes is:

- To inform and educate the nation about the cultural significance of dry stone walls and structures in Australia and their associations and meanings for past, present and future generations.
- To document DSW and DSS and draw on historical records in order to encourage appreciation, conservation, maintenance, repair and interpretation of those of cultural significance.
- To establish disciplines and accreditation systems that can contribute to the care and construction of DSW and DSS.
 - To assist in ensuring that new construction, demolition, intrusions and other changes do not adversely affect the cultural significance of DSW and DSS and that modern uses of them are compatible.
- To respect Indigenous heritage places and cultural values and, in particular, to assist in the conservation of those associated with DSA and DSS.

In the process, the DSWAA can play a critical role in educating dry stone wall owners and the community of the significance of dry stone walls and allied structures in the landscape and encouraging their retention, as well as assisting in promotion of the waller's craft and practical conservation of Australia's extensive, only part-documented dry stone wall legacy.



SECTION 1: THE ASSOCIATION

1.1 Incorporation

The Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia was formed at a public meeting held in Ballarat in Victoria on 27 July 2002. The Association was established in response to an articulated need to ensure the survival and protection of this significant part of Australia's cultural landscape for future generations.

The DSWAA became incorporated in Victoria on 5 September 2003 (No. A0044737S) under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 which is regulated by Consumer Affairs Victoria.

On 6 June 2020 the Association was registered by the Australian Securities & Investments Commission as a Registered Australian Body (ARBN 641 358 581). This registration extends recognition of the Association's incorporated status in Victoria to all states and territories.

1.2 Rules of Association

The Association operates under its Own Rules in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian legislation. The Rules specify a range of rights and obligations of members, that the Association is not-for-profit, is administered by a Committee of Management, and is guided by its stated Vision and Purposes.

The DSWAA Rules of Association were last revised at the Annual General Meeting in June 2019. The Vision and Purposes, shown on the preceding page, are taken from the Rules.

1.3 Committee of Management 2023-2024

President	Emma Knowles
Vice President	Timothy Hubbard
Secretary	Stuart Read
Treasurer	Bruce Munday

Committee members:	Andrew Garner
	Jim Holdsworth
	Raelene Marshall

Emma Knowles was elected President and Timothy Hubbard, Vice President, on 25 June 2023.

SECTION 2: EXECUTIVE REPORTS

2.1 President's Report

2.1.1 The Committee – Chair's Report

Emma Knowles

On being voted into the position of President of the DSWAA at the previous AGM, possessing the required skills, networks, relationships, financial backing and respect of many association members and trade professionals, I felt very optimistic about the future of the association and its capacity to become the much-needed national industry peak body for dry stone walling.

It must be acknowledged that DSWAA has a very small member base, and most wallers choose not to be involved (and are therefore under-represented). Prior to the committee's 2022 commitment to become the peak body for the trade, the association's primary focus has been on heritage activities in Victoria and delivering popular social field events for local enthusiasts, so I anticipated a need for gentle change management and time for the committee to upskill with regards to the new national trade responsibilities that come with claiming peak body status. All with the aim of creating a future for the trade, and in doing so, generating vital solutions to the long-standing heritage, educative, membership and artistic goals of the association.

The strategic development event took place, with the committee identifying extremely similar goals to the under progressed previous strategic plan, established in 2017. Work has commenced on the planning required to refresh the website, and some gains were made regarding the storage of digital records in a shared location in order to centralise and protect the storage of information and assist access and continuity. A simple workflow management system was also developed and proposed but remains unadopted at this stage. Review of the ongoing financial viability of the DSWAA remains a critically imperative.

The DSWAA were well represented at the ICOMOS General Assembly convention in Sydney in September 2023, attended by Stuart Read and Timothy Hubbard, and I had the privilege of exhibiting a full-size reconstruction of an ancient Ngunnhu dry stone fish trap with a Ngemba elder from Brewarrina.



Figure 1: Reconstruction of Ngunnhu fish trap at ICOMOS convention, Darling Harbour, NSW, 9/2024 (Emma Knowles)

With the \$20,000 philanthropic funding I was able to bring into the association, I staged Australia's first international stone festival over 12 days in March 2024. Dry stone and carving experts from around the world joined enthusiasts and professionals from all over the country

in a wide-ranging learning opportunities and events. The accreditation events held during the festival saw 7 people successfully gain accreditation – almost doubling the number of professionally qualified wallers and instructors in Australia, as well as offering a large increase in DSWAA membership, from people who are actively involved.



Figures 2, 3: Public constructions created during the Great Australian Stone Festival, Wellington, 3/2024 (Emma Knowles)

Considering the goals laid out in the strategic plan and working with feedback from trade professionals and associates from around the country, I proposed changes to the association rules, with the aim of reducing barriers to membership, and increasing good governance, particularly with regards to committee membership. These proposals have not advanced, and all elements remain an issue.

2.1.1 The Committee – Chair’s Report

Emma Knowles

While I’ve successfully managed to profile numerous heritage activities such as ICOMOS’s General Assembly in Sydney, the reacquisition of skills in Brewarrina and the Bathurst Heritage Trades Trails, I have unfortunately, been unsuccessful in uniting the committee to achieve a stronger focus on member and trade activities. To be an effective peak body for the trade, that is to oversee the delivery of the accreditation system, set and maintain fair standards, appropriately endorse expertise and heritage processes, develop learning opportunities, develop profile and community and advocate on behalf of the trade, the association needs this strong focus (as well as committee capacity to operate at a national level) to achieve the status of a peak body and avoid further reputational damage.

As a professional waller, instructor and positive advocate with a demonstrated long-term commitment to the industry, I lack confidence this can be achieved by the associations long standing management committee, but I look forward to working with colleagues and community across the trade, who can support the vision of a thriving traditional stone industry in Australia.



Figure 4: Baiame's Ngunnhu or Brewarrina Fish Traps in the Barwon River, visited by Roger Borrell and Vice-President Timothy Hubbard during the Great Australian Stone Festival, in Wellington, NSW (c/o Timothy Hubbard)

2.2 Vice President's Report

Timothy Hubbard

In preparation for writing my report this year, I have reviewed several past vice-presidents' reports as well as my own from last year. I am keen to present a fair, truthful and as far as possible, optimistic report. However, while much has been achieved there has been some discord within the Committee of Management which must be mentioned.

The Committee's work started the day after the last AGM when the longstanding notion of key portfolios to guide our work was confirmed and developed at our Strategic Planning Day. Each equally important, the portfolios are:

- Governance & Membership
- Trade, Training & Certification
- Community, Events & Communication
- Heritage Advocacy & Conservation.

I have worked hard with other Committee members, building on the excellent work done by Jim Holdsworth and his sub-committee in 2019, to create a model for implementing the decisions made on that day. Unfortunately, this initiative has again lost some of its momentum but none of its importance for the long-term viability of the Association. I hope that with new members on the Committee after the 2023-24 AGM, and some existing members continuing to provide hindsight, the



portfolios will be occupied by appropriate people. Each portfolio would be led by a Committee member as Convenor, supported by another as their deputy and several ordinary members who have experience, contacts and credentials in each responsibility. It may be appropriate to co-opt the help of people outside the Association.

Members have appreciated the re-established monthly Newsletter. With her talent for graphic design, Kathryn Hennig has been particularly helpful with the project. It is part of our trilogy of digital communication, along with *The Flag Stone* and our Facebook page.

Members will have noticed that our popular field trips are returning after the hiatus caused by the Covid pandemic. The Lethbridge event in November last year was a great success as was a SA field trip in April. Most exciting is the planned return to Tasmania in March 2025 for a field trip in the Midlands. We hope to have several events across different states each year. Any ideas and offers to assist with planning would be much appreciated.

The DSWAA website also needed review and redesign. A sub-committee has been set up to oversee the project. Stuart Gonsal, an IT expert suggested by Committee member, Raelene Marshall has provided initial, and indeed encouraging advice. Kathryn Hennig's IT skills have been essential in this continuing task. Together, we have removed out-of-date content, updated some key texts, forms and links, and streamlined what I understand to be 'back-end' matters dealing with accessibility and functions. A key improvement will be a new drop-down menu dedicated to Membership. Much more needs to be done.

In late March I attended the *Great Australian Stone Festival*, in Wellington NSW. Congratulations are due to Emma Knowles, our current President, her team at Stone of Arc and the local volunteers for its success. The event was sponsored by the DSWAA, and we were able, eventually, to promote it to our members, several of whom attended. Non-members who attended were invited to apply for membership of the DSWAA with their first year's subscription waived. About forty people have been invited to join. Perhaps the most important success at the GASF was the testing and certification of seven people according to the trade standard of the Dry Stone Walling Association in the UK. I wrote personally to those who passed who are not members of the DSWAA and invited them to apply. I also invited them to nominate for our online Directory of Certified Wallers. The highlight of the festival for me was visiting the Brewarrina Indigenous Fish Traps.

However, I must report that for most of the past year the Committee has neither functioned as it should, nor as it has for many years. It is not moving forward with its various roles and responsibilities as an effective entity. This must change if the DSWAA is to progress and achieve its Vision and Statement of Purposes as set out elsewhere in this Report. It is important that the Association pursues all elements of the Association's activities and goals to achieve, through inclusive leadership, our broader responsibilities and duty. If necessary, further information can be provided at the AGM.



2.3 Secretary's Report

Stuart Read

The Committee has met monthly by Zoom, with 2023-2024 also a quiet year.

The Society has an average of two to four contacts a month via our website. Enquiries were wide-ranging this year. They have included liaison with Heritage Tasmania about DSWAA going on their stakeholder emailing list and vice versa, for fielding enquiries. And Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads, about a conservation management plan for dry stone walls supporting the Paluma / Mt. Spec Tourist Road, near Ingham – Townsville.

DSWAA liaised closely with the City of Whittlesea (Victoria) on the dry stone wall recording Smartphone App that Council has developed; testing it, and re-formatting it so DSWAA can promote it for broader public use. And, with Golden Plains Shire Council who are scoping the walls in their district, with a mind to a tourism driving trail and wider promotion.

DSWAA changed insurers to get a better deal for a not-for-profit community group for our events, after GIO advised they were unable to renew our previous insurance.

DSWAA has found a permanent home for its *A Stone upon a Stone* exhibition panels, with Melbourne's Living Museum of the West (who organised the federal grant that helped create this exhibition, and were its early custodian, before DSWAA). The museum will display these at differing venues, including using them in a schools program they are developing.

We've made some progress on a gradual archives and history project of digitising Association records that should be publicly accessible, to upload and store in Collections Victoria's website.

The Association lodges its annual report with government-based regulator of not-for-profit / charitable groups, Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV). Providing digital annual statements is part of CAV's task of monitoring NGO activity. Our statement is required by 30 November 2024.

2.4 Treasurer's Report

Bruce Munday

See [Section 4: Financial Reports, pp.18 - 19](#)



Figure 5: A triple topped wall out the back of Dundonnell up the road from Mt Fyans, Victoria, a large cattle property, a large cattle property. Very old and only some of it is intact. Not far from the Mount Elephant hotel (June Barling)



Figure 3: Gateways and triple-topped dry stone wall out the back of Dundonnell up the road from Mt Fyans, Victoria (June Barling)

SECTION 3: COMMITTEE REPORTS

3.1 Training and Accreditation

Emma Knowles

A number of commercial enterprises have continued to deliver private training opportunities, and our two active DSWA qualified instructors, myself and Geoff Duggan, have provided training to well over 100 people throughout the year, at both Introductory level and above. This included a small successful Level 2 test event presided over by Geoff, as the Master Examiner, and I have continued to deliver Introductory courses in partnership with the Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades in Ballarat.

During the great Australian Stone Festival, hobbyists and professionals got the opportunity to work with international master craftsmen on challenging dry stone public constructions, providing immense learning opportunities for all.

The Stone of Arc training centre also provided exam preparation training, assisting 7 practitioners to successfully gain accreditation across 3 levels of the DSWA craft certification scheme, presided over by UK Master Examiner's Peter Isherwood and Alan Rhodes. Two newly qualified professionals also undertook the first delivery of the DSWA Instructor training program to take place in Australia, bringing qualified DSWA instructor numbers to 5.



I have continued to work with the DSWA UK in order to build our capacity to support the full implementation of the Craftsman Certification Scheme in Australia, under the governance of an authoritative peak body. Given the many beneficial opportunities achieving peak body status would create for experienced and aspiring wallers, not to mention dry stone heritage and community aspirations as a whole, it's extremely important that the DSWAA seeks to heavily invest in building its capacity and positive reputation, if it's to attain that status.

3.2 Community Liaison

Stuart Read

Enquiries via our website included notice of a congress on dry stone in France with 15 countries coming and another to join a UNESCO community of 'art of dry stone construction – intangible heritage' with 13 country members. A Cornish hedge builder (dry stone retaining wall with earth and stone facing) moving to Australia and a Scottish waller with a year's working visa year got in touch about opportunities. We were contacted by RM Williams' *Outback* magazine for ideas on stone structures and building that define Australia for an upcoming feature article.

DSWAA updated its not-for-profit community group information with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), as a 'registered Australian body' and updating DSWAA's recorded Officeholders, for compliance reporting. Similar updating was done with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) about updated requirements for annual reporting.

Over the year, the majority of community requests have been enquiries for wallers for jobs across Australia. Many were asking re upcoming workshops and events. They included a call for closer liaison with Heritage Tasmania and waller advice to inform a conservation management plan for a dry-stone retaining wall supported road (Mount Spec Tourist Road, near Townsville). The website directory has been useful, as have extensive committee member knowledge of practising wallers. Some enquiries are heritage issues, seeking help with crumbling or damaged walls needing expertise to repair, or help conserving walls under threat.

3.3 Events

Jim Holdsworth

Member surveys and informal chats consistently indicate that field trips and related activities are seen as a major benefit of membership. Here is a summary of events over the last twelve months.

AGM 2023 and visit to Buninyong

Following the formalities of the AGM in Ballarat on Saturday 3 June, many of the attendees proceeded to nearby Buninyong where our newly re-elected President introduced us to a magnificent and engaging wall she had recently completed on the boundary of a residential property adjacent to a local park and playground. The challenges of getting to a final product were many but the result was impressive. The group then walked to the nearby Crown Hotel for a socially enjoyable get-together and dinner.



Strategy Day, Ballarat

On Sunday 4 June, at the Rare Trades Centre in Ballarat, the new Committee spent the day under the guidance of facilitator Geoff Park discussing the future of the Association and developing a Strategy to take the Association forward. We agreed on the scope, details, and responsibilities under four Focus Areas: Trade, Heritage and Conservation, Community, and Governance and Organisational Sustainability.

It is regrettable to look back and realise how little of that Strategy has been implemented over the past twelve months. Re-endorsing the Strategy and focusing on the implementation of all four Focus Areas must be a priority of the new Committee, within a more holistic and committed management environment. Our membership, as well as professional wallers and weekend enthusiasts, deserve nothing less.

Lethbridge

Member Laurie Atkins wrote, in issue no. 58 of *The Flag Stone*, about some intriguing dry stone walls in the village of Lethbridge, about 40 km north-west of Geelong. This prompted the idea of a field trip to explore the region and those curious walls.

On Sunday 26 November a group of about thirty members and friends met at the entrance to *Austin's Winery* at Sutherland's Creek to marvel at Bronte Payne's engaging serpentine wall that embraces the grand entrance to the winery. A visit to historic *Moranghurk* homestead and its heritage listed garden and dry stone walls preceded a walk into the now defunct *Nash's Quarry* near Lethbridge to see its basalt quarry faces and stone chimney before afternoon tea in Lethbridge hosted by Andrew and Karin Miller. Were rock cakes a coincidence?

After a thorough but unresolved study of those intriguing walls in several locations in the town, the group moved to *Artrocks*, the home and dry stone walled gardens of member Bronte Payne and Ade Loe who hosted a dinner for about twenty members.

Tasmania's Midlands

The Committee and member Andrew Garner began initial arrangements for an autumn tour in the dry stone wall rich heritage area of Tasmania's Midlands. As the tentative date was close to the *Great Australian Stone Festival* in and around our President's property in Wellington NSW, the Tasmanian tour was postponed to avoid people choosing one event rather than the other. It is hoped that the Tasmania tour can be held early in 2025; trips to Tasmania being always well-attended and enjoyable.

The Great Australian Stone Festival

The Association sponsored *The Great Australian Stone Festival*, master-minded by our President and held in Wellington NSW from 15 to 26 March. A number of members attended. It is reported in more detail elsewhere in this Report.

Looking ahead

The incoming Committee is encouraged to continue the program of events, possibly including webinars, and illustrated talks as well as field trips to new and previously visited places. Field trips are both rewarding and a means of promoting the profession and highlighting the heritage represented by dry stone walls and structures.

South Australian Workshops

Bruce Munday

Two hands-on dry stone walling workshops were held for beginners, one in November 2023 and the other in April 2024. Both weekend workshops were held at Coromandel Valley in the Adelaide Hills. All up 24 participants learned how to build a safe free-standing wall from scratch. The workshops were coordinated by me, SA representative of the DSWAA, and led by certified Level-2 waller Jon Moore. All workshop participants received a manual *Building Dry Stone Walls – a guide for beginners*, authored by me.

There have now been twenty-seven weekend workshops in this series, training approximately 300 learner-wallers. There is still demand for workshops, interest almost entirely driven by word-of-mouth advertising. The training model is to build a wall at Jon Moore's property where he provides the stone, much of it from the wall built at the previous workshop. Stripping out the original wall continues to be a useful teaching tool as learners see the basic principles of walling as the old wall is 'opened up'. Students also learn about types of stone, where to source and assess it, tools and of course safety.

Participants are encouraged to complete an exit survey, results of which have been very encouraging and helpful. The safety record has been good, with three minor reportable incidents (over the 27 workshops), none resulting in insurance claims or treatment.

Participants pay \$290 for a workshop and the Jon receives \$2500 + GST.



Figures 7 & 8: Dry Stone Wall Workshop, Corromandel Valley, South Australia. (Bruce Munday).

This year DSWAA decided not to endorse these workshops because neither Jon nor I are certified instructors. I have had a successful career teaching adults and quite a bit of experience building dry stone structures. I have also read widely on the subject and authored a couple of published books along with an instruction manual endorsed by a UK Master craftsman. Put that together with Jon's walling skills and I believe we have a first-rate package. DSWAA could have exercised some creative thinking rather than being inflexibly tied to the UK system with roughly 200,000 km of drystone walls and hundreds of skilled wallers.

South Australian Field Trip

Bruce Munday

A half-day field trip to *Rosebank* in the Adelaide Hills was a great success. There is so much to see at this wonderful property, and we were (as usual) welcomed by the McLachlan family.

Several who attended the very first beginners' workshops (held at *Rosebank* a decade ago) came to this event. Lots of walls, wells, and other things. Great to see what has happened over a decade.



Figure 9: credit P Cole



Figure 10: credit S-A Crawford

3.4 Dry Stone Walls Recording Project

Jim Holdsworth

The City of Whittlesea, on Melbourne's burgeoning northern outskirts, is home to exceptional examples of the wallers' craft in the context of farming in the area since European settlement.

With Victorian state funding, the City of Whittlesea has undertaken a program of research and surveys and has recently released a suite of material that comprises a DSW Toolkit which includes:

- Dry Stone Wall Design Guidelines
- Dry Stone Wall Management Plan
- Dry Stone wall Mapping App
- Dry Stone Wall General User guide
- A series of instructive and explanatory videos

DSWAA members David Moloney, Laurie Atkins and I have provided expertise and consultancy services to Whittlesea as contributors to the overall project.

I am very pleased to report that Colleen Lazenby, Coordinator Heritage Strategy and Programs at the City of Whittlesea, has agreed to work with the incoming DSWAA Committee in a program of liaising with the more than twenty municipalities in Victoria where significant dry stone walls are to be found. This is an excellent means whereby our Focus Areas of Trade and Heritage & Conservation can be progressed. There is potential to expand the program beyond Victoria.

Community and wall owner awareness of the valued stock of dry stone walls and structures is important, assisting in maintenance, protection, and celebration of this element of our built environment.



3.5 Communications and Marketing

Bruce Munday, Andrew Garner.

3.5.1 The Flag Stone

Bruce Munday

The Flag Stone was published three times this year and emailed to members using Mail Chimp. Bruce Munday continued as editor, sourcing interesting articles and photos for this very well-read publication. Copies are sent to DSWAI, DSWA(GB) and The Stone Trust as part of an exchange. These organisations have been very obliging in response to our requests to use their material.

Issues 58, 59 and 60 of *The Flag Stone* were published with contributions from committee members and some general members, maintaining the overall style established by Charmian Brent and now running to approximately 20+ pages.

We continue to publish a mix of local and international stories. As noted previously we are probably overdue to survey readers about what they enjoy from *The Flag Stone* and what they would like to see more or less of. In response to a suggestion at the 2021 AGM we have introduced a Letters page – the response has been quiet. Perhaps this form of journalism is *passee* in the era of social media.

Copies of *The Flag Stone* are archived at the National Library of Australia.

Bruce Munday has indicated that he will step down as editor now after 28 editions. He is willing to assist the next editor if he can be at all helpful.

The Flag Stone

Issue No. 60, May 2024

ISSN 2204-8316

Editor: Bruce Munday

Protecting, building, discovering dry stone walls



Old dry stone water race
Sam Koch

Flagstone, a sedimentary rock that splits into layers along bedding planes, lends itself to multiple applications: pavers, walls, fences, roofs and ornamental structures. See for example *TFS #55, pp 15-17*.

From its beginning in 2006 *The Flag Stone* has been the flagship for DSWAA, covering technical know-how, historic monuments, cultural icons and personal encounters. It is our visible presence. This issue, Number 60, has all of those along with (as usual) the relatively obscure.

In an era when just about anything can be captured by Google, I sometimes wonder why would anyone bother reading *TFS*. Couldn't we just send out the occasional newsletter with an array of internet links. But maybe there is something more personal in a publication assembled by a real person, based on contributions from real people, not unlike the reader.

The content comes from master wallers here and overseas, heritage boffins, tourists, wannabe wallers and enthusiastic amateurs (like me). It is enriched by linkage to like-minded international walling bodies such as [Stone Trust \(USA\)](#), [DSWAI \(Ireland\)](#) and [DSWA \(GB\)](#). The feedback has been hugely encouraging, often giving birth to articles for the following edition and certainly showing widespread interest in dry stone walls in Oz.

Contributions to this issue from three 'beginner wallers' remind me of an aphorism: 'Good teachers must know their stuff, must know the students they intend to stuff, but most importantly must stuff them artistically'. The students then go on to enjoy what they learned.

From time to time there has been talk of indexing all the articles from across the years. At least the significant pieces – but still a huge job. Perhaps something for a retiree.

I took over this position as a 'temp' in January 2015, following the redoubtable Charmian Clift who held the reins for 27 issues. Somehow I have seen off 28 – never the plan, but I would not have done it had it not been fun. It is a rewarding 'job' where you meet wonderful people, learn heaps, bookmark future holiday destinations and have just the occasional editorial scrap.

A couple of things are certain: the next iteration will have less of a South Australian bias; there will be less written by/about me.

Bruce Munday [DSWAA President **Emma Knowles** is currently in UK]

- This issue**
- Planning DSW protection-in Victoria
 - Travelling back in time
 - Walls with different stone
 - Fish traps WA
 - Rocks of Andros
 - Wells in Tigray
 - Splitting, lifting, paving
 - Learners become doers
 - Multi-sourced stone
 - Book review
 - Obituary

Interested in editing *The Flag Stone*?
Contact DSWAA Admin [Kathryn Hennig](#)

THE FLAG STONE, ISSUE NUMBER 60 <1>

Figure 11: Front cover of *The Flag Stone*, Issue No.60.

(Bruce Munday)



3.5.2 DSWAA Facebook Page

Andrew Garner

The DSWAA Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/drystonewallsaustralia?mibextid=ZbWKwL> has been ticking along with fortnightly posts ranging from upcoming workshops to technical articles and reposts from other walling groups around the world.

Numerous likes and comments have been received, with messages and enquiries being answered in a prompt manner.

There are currently around 2,229 followers.

3.6 Membership

Timothy Hubbard

After the last AGM it was clear that the Membership Register and the system of subscription renewals needed review and reform. It was decided at the 2023-24 AGM to discontinue three-year memberships, a reform now in place. A major effort has been made to update the Register as required under our Rules of Association and in readiness for this year's AGM.

As well as that legal duty, the Register is critical for good governance overall: our administration, finances, communication, right-to-vote and standing for office. The Register is maintained as an Excel Workbook with several spreadsheets, generally chronological, which indicate who is and who isn't financial. It has suffered from:

- the hiatus of the COVID pandemic years and a change of administrative personnel
- some confusion between memberships, donations and events
- some confusion between single and household memberships (one for two or two for one)
- some confusion between one year and enduring three-year memberships
- some memberships not recorded when they arrived.

About 100 members whose financial status was in doubt were asked to provide evidence of payment if they believed the Committee's assessment was incorrect. We are well on the way to resolving the issues. Our medium-term aim is to adopt an appropriate software package to maintain all our membership records efficiently and securely, and to remind members when renewal is due.

At next year's AGM, the Committee will probably need to raise the membership fees, which have been stable for several years, to accommodate the most recent inflationary pressure and extra expenses.

3.6.1 Appointment of an Administrative Assistant

Timothy Hubbard

The Committee appointed Kathryn Hennig as the new Administrative Assistant just before the last AGM. She has helped to improve and streamline our systems. It was necessary for her to take personal leave for several months, but she has since returned and is working well on several fronts. Kathryn and the Vice-President, in the absence of the President, have held regular 'homework' meetings to implement the directives of the Committee.

Kathryn was at the core of our recent success in retrieving access to our website connection and webpage software. Also helpful were several 'white knights', longstanding members and friends who had set up the system. Thank you especially Lyn Allison, Geoff Thomas and Daniel Ligtoet.

There is no doubt that we need an Administrative Assistant. Kathryn's performance is professional, gracious and never without good humour.



Figure 12: Nash's Quarry site visited on the Lethbridge field trip. (Raelene Marshall)

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL REPORTS

4.1 Financial Report 2023-2024

OPENING BALANCE at 01 June 2023

Cash – Operating Account	\$29,826.60
Cash – Term Deposit	\$ 6,756.64
PayPal	\$ 0
Total Membership Funds	\$36,583.24

Activity for year 2023-24	Debit	Credit	Balance
Insurance	\$1,167.57		\$1,167.57/
ASIC	\$378		\$378/
Admin assist	\$1362.82		\$1362.82/
Website	\$456		\$456/
Mail Chimp	254.09		\$254.09/
Membership fees		2209.70	2209.70
Vic Field Trip	\$400	\$1150	\$750
SA Field trip	\$240	\$240	\$0
2023 AGM (travel)	\$1185.60		\$1185.60/
Planning workshop	\$3872	\$240	\$3632/
GASF ¹	\$18,043.30		\$18,043.30/
Gift	\$76.87		\$76.87/
Donations		\$170	\$170
Totals	\$27,436.25	\$4009.70	\$23,426.55/

CLOSING BALANCE at 31 May 2024

Cash – Operating Account	\$ 6,311.88
Cash – Term Deposit (to mature 31 Jan 2025)	\$ 6,903.66
Cash – PayPal	\$0
Total Membership Funds	\$ 13,215.54

Closing minus Opening **~~\$ 23,367.70/~~**

¹ Drawing on \$20,000 donation previous year

4.2 Financial Report 2022-2023

OPENING BALANCE at 01 June 2022

Cash – Operating Account	\$ 14,249.62
Cash – Term Deposit	\$ 6,748.74
PayPal	\$ 0.00
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP FUNDS	\$ 20,998.36

ACTIVITY FOR YEAR 2022-2023

CATEGORY	DEBIT	CREDIT	BALANCE
Insurance / Cons. Affairs	\$ 1,077.60	-	\$ 1,077.60/
Administration	\$ 3,007.68	-	\$ 3,007.68/
Website	\$ 186.60	-	\$ 186.60/
Membership	\$ 16.76	\$ 2,261.89	\$ 2,245.13
Victorian Field Trip	\$ 491.00	\$ 745.00	\$ 254.00
South Australian Workshops	\$ 5,077.00	\$ 6,480.00	\$ 1,403.00
AGM (2023)	\$ 1,920.00	-	\$ 1,920.00/
Whittlesea Project	\$ 458.00	-	\$ 458.00/
Donations		\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Interest		\$ 11.86	\$ 11.86
TOTALS	\$12,234.64	\$29,498.75	\$17,264.17

CLOSING BALANCE at 26 May 2023

Cash – Operating Account	\$31,505.83
Cash – Term Deposit	\$ 6,756.64
PayPal	\$ 0.00
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP FUNDS	\$38,262.47

CLOSING minus OPENING: \$17,264.11

Notes:

Comparing the 2023-24 financial statement with that for 2022-23 shows a net loss of \$23,367.07 following an apparent profit of \$15,584.88.

This is an anomaly, largely a result of a \$20k donation in 2022-23 expended in 2023-24. There were further large expenses associated with 2023 strategic planning activity.

DSWAA must consider its financial position, either reducing expenses or exploring other sources of revenue.